

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claim 1 was objected to because of informalities. Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by German Patent 90,977.

Amended claim 1 makes clear that the bearing surface of the flange is curvedly beveled towards the joining pipe.

A similar “curvedly beveled surface” is not seen in DE 90977, wherein the bearing surface engaged by the clamping jaw is flat and only the end edge thereof, which has no bearing function is curved.

This means that the flange of DE 90977 has the drawback explained on page 4, lines 12-17 of the description of the present application, i.e., it has a shape that may cause blocking of the opening of the jaw when the jaw reaches the peripheral portion of the bearing surface of the flange.

In contrast, the curvedly beveled surface according to the present invention allows the release opposing force to decrease towards the periphery of the bearing surface so as to compensate for the decrease of the arm of the opening force.

On page 2, before line 28, please insert the following:

Brief Description of the Drawings

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 3, line 9 through line 12 with the following rewritten paragraphs.

Figure 5 shows a side view of the flange-jaw coupling with the jaw rotated by 10° in the opening sense; and

Figure 6 shows a side view in magnified scale of the flange-jaw coupling zone in Figure 5; and

On page 3, before line 13, please insert the following:

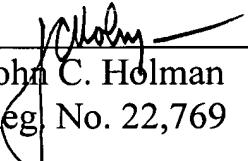
Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application should now be in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is in order, and such favorable action and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

However, if after reviewing the above amendments and remarks, the Examiner has any questions or comments, she is cordially invited to contact the undersigned attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

JACOBSON HOLMAN PLLC

By: 
John C. Holman
Reg. No. 22,769

400 Seventh Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004-2201
(202) 638-6666
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